

New Bedford March 11th 1839.

my dear little Henry,

I meant to have written to you before as I promised, but have been prevented by want of time. How do you get on with your reading? I hope soon you will learn to write, so that I can have a letter from you in your own hand-writing. You will be glad to hear that I am going to have a vacation in May, & I expect to have a very good time. Send me word if you shall be in Weymouth then. I wish you could come down here and make me a visit. You would enjoy seeing the water and the whale-ships very much. To say nothing of the candle-works. Four whale ships have arrived since I have been here. Early the other morning we heard the sound of a gun & looking far out to sea we saw a beautiful great ship, with her sails all spread. Every body here hoped it was the William Bickel & so it was. — with ~~400~~ ⁴⁰⁰ barrels of whale, and 1,700 barrels of sperm on board. She has been away in the Pacific Ocean more than three years. Mr Howland's nephew is mate of the vessel, & in the evening he came down to see her. I wish you could have been here to hear the stories he told about whales. While he has been gone he has killed 30 with his own hand. One was very cunning, & the moment they got the boat out she ⁶ saw them, & there is great danger with such a bright

whale as that. He kept his body under water & only
 his head out as high as the top of the door. & made
 for the boat, which he stove into pieces so small that
 there were nothing but the oars to cling to. Another
 boat picked up the men & he rushed upon them so
 furiously, that they were all obliged to leave it. After
 frightening them as much as possible, he swam off, leaving
 them to get their oil where they could. You must tell
 your father that the sperm oil sold for \$1.04 per gallon an

The next whale ship that
 comes in we are going down to
 see her — going on board of her

Henry Chapman
 Boston
 Mass

board the vessel. There is a lady of the name of Howland
 here, who has gone a whaling with her husband. & the
 people think she exerts a good influence for the vessel
 has made \$1,000 per month ever since she has been
 gone. She does all the writing, & every now & then, the
 owners have a letter from her telling how things are
 going on. I write this for your mother's benefit. Give much
 love to Lucy & little Ann. Be a good boy & try to learn all
 you can. Good bye. your affectionate Belles

MS A.9.2.11.57